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*Interested feelings blind the mind  
and pervert the judgment.*

GOD forbid the Judges of Israel to take any gift from any one, whose cause they judged. The reason assigned for this prohibition was thus expressed : "For a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous." Deut. xvi. 19.

IF a Judge is a wise man, and otherwise disposed to judge and decide righteously ; yet when he has accepted a present from a man whose cause he is to decide, he will feel such an interest in that man's cause, as will tend, even imperceptibly to himself, to blind his mind to the real merits of the case, and to pervert his words, so that he will be apt to pronounce a partial or perverse judgment.—This takes it for granted, or asserts it as a fact, that human nature is such, that men are improper and incompetent judges, in cases wherein they are personally interested—that their interest will produce such a bias in their minds to the side on

which their interest lies, as tends to render them more or less blind to what is just, right, and true, and to make them really think and judge erroneously—different from or even contrary to truth and right.

That such is the fact, men very generally admit, and firmly believe, in cases where their worldly and pecuniary interests are at stake. Hence, They generally consider it improper and unsafe, to leave a matter in dispute, to the decision of a man, who has a personal interest in the issue of the cause, or who is nearly related to one of the parties, even when he is considered as an upright and judicious person ; lest the influence of his feelings should produce such a bias in favor of one side, to the prejudice of the other, as would blind his mind, and pervert his judgment.

Hence it may easily be seen, that we are in great danger of forming wrong opinions, and judging erroneously, in matters between ourselves and others, in cases innumerable. Being all, more or less, of a selfish disposition,

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our feelings incline to the side of self. Hence, from the bias of our feelings, we are exceeding apt to think, in many cases, that less is due from us to others, and more from them to us, than is in reality. And when our interest or inclination, and that of others, seem to clash and stand in opposition, the bias of our feelings hath a great tendency to make us think it right and just to pursue our own, however crossing it be to our neighbor's. We should, therefore, learn to be diffident of our own judgment, and to exercise candor towards others, when we and they disagree in matters in which we are so interested, as would naturally tend to bias us and them to different or contrary opinions.

In such cases both may be out of the way, and from the like causes; and yet both of us verily think we are in the right. And if others are to blame, for suffering their interest or inclination to bias their mind and pervert their judgment, we may be equally to blame on the like account. Many hard thoughts and hard sayings of one another, probably proceed from the wrong opinions and erroneous judgment, into which we are respectively led by our interested feelings. Again,

This plain truth or fact, that interested feelings have a great tendency to blind the mind and pervert the judgment, may serve to teach us, how very incompetent we are, without supernatural revelation and divine teaching, to judge of the character and ways of God—how it is proper for him to treat us—of what it is proper for him to re-

quire of us—of what we deserve at his hands, or may reasonably expect from him; and how extremely dangerous it is, to rest in any opinions of our own, or of men, in these high and all-important points, which are formed independently of his word, and especially, in opposition to the plain and express declarations of it.

If the interested feelings produced in a man, otherwise upright and wise, by a present or gift of some earthly treasure, are so great, as to blind his eyes and pervert his judgment, and thereby to render him unfit and disqualified to decide a matter in dispute between his neighbors, and even incapable of judging impartially; we may well conclude, that *sinful men* are very incompetent and totally disqualified for judging and determining rightly, respecting the character and ways of God, and the concerns between him and themselves, in which their feelings are interested in the highest conceivable degree, and wholly on the side of an erroneous judgment.

Indeed mankind, aside from the consideration of their sinfulness, and the interested feelings and blinding biases founded therein, are, of themselves, utterly incompetent to judge and determine in things so infinitely great, high, and important. If they were of a perfectly upright, impartial, and holy disposition, their scanty knowledge, their extremely small and limited capacities, in comparison of God, would render them utterly incompetent, without revelation and divine teaching, to judge and determine rightly, concern-

ing the character and ways of God, and what it is fit and proper for him to require, to do, &c. Therefore, when, in addition to the incompetency of our natural faculties, we take into view the great and powerful influence of the interested feelings founded in and arising from the wickedness of our hearts and lives, to blind our minds, and bias us to an erroneous and false judgment, *how undeniably evident* must it be, that of ourselves we are totally unfit and incompetent to judge and determine things so infinitely great and important, and that it must be dangerous in the extreme, to rest in any opinions of our own, which are not warranted by the word of God, and especially, if contrary to its plain declarations?

This might be illustrated by stating a great variety of cases, wherein it would evidently appear, that the interested feelings founded in our wickedness, and resulting from the situation into which this hath brought us, would have full out as great a tendency or influence to blind our minds, and pervert our judgment, as any gift or bribe can be supposed to have upon a judge. For example,

Let the question be, Whether it is wrong, or displeasing to God, for us to indulge and gratify our natural inclinations and desires after the riches, and honors, and pleasures of this world, provided, we do not injure and abuse our fellow creatures in order to obtain them?

In this case it is plain, that the whole weight of influence from the strength of our inclinations and desires after these

objects, will be on the side of concluding it right and safe to indulge and gratify them, and that all the satisfaction and pleasure expected therefrom, will operate, like a gift or bribe in the hand of a judge, to blind our minds and pervert our judgment, and to make us quick at inventing plausible arguments to justify the indulgence, and to render us blind or insensible to the force of reasons or arguments against it.

Again, Was it proper, or consistent with justice, for God to make a constitution so connecting with the first man all his posterity, that their becoming sinners under condemnation, should be the certain consequence of his disobedience? And hath God actually done so?

Is it proper and right, that such imperfect and depraved creatures as we are, should be held under the obligations of a law, which requires perfect holiness in the heart and life, on pain of the wrath of God?

Is the evil of sin so great, as to deserve an endless punishment? Do we, as sinners, deserve such a punishment? And would it be just in God to inflict it upon us?

Upon the bare statement of these questions, it will be readily seen, that our interested feelings will strongly incline to answer them in the negative, and be wholly opposed to an acknowledgment of the truth of an affirmative answer.

Once more,

Is it essential to the character of an all-sufficient and perfectly wise and good God, to make all his intelligent creatures finally



happy? And may we expect that he will do so?

If the affirmative of this question can be firmly established in the sinner's mind, he will be freed from all terrors arising from the fear of eternal misery, and feel all the comfort and joy of an expectation of eternal happiness. What gift or bribe can be thought to operate so powerfully on an earthly judge, to interest his feelings in favor of the giver, as such infinite good in the sinner's view, will upon him, to interest his feelings in favor of the affirmative of this question—that is, in favor of the opinion, that it is essential to the character of an all-sufficient and perfectly wise and good God, to make all his creatures finally happy?

Therefore, if sinful men undertake to decide this question, independently of divine revelation, is there not the greatest reason to think they will persuade, or, at least, labor hard to persuade themselves, that this must be the case—that all must be finally happy?—Yea, we find it a fact, that some, who profess to believe the scriptures, do, nevertheless, come into this conclusion with apparent confidence, though directly contrary to many most plain and express declarations of those divine oracles.

Numerous other cases might be stated, but these may be sufficient to illustrate the fact, that we, sinful creatures, on account of the blinding and perverting influence of our interested feelings, are peculiarly incompetent and highly disqualified, without divine teaching, to judge of the character and ways of God—of the manner in which

it is fit and proper for him to treat us and deal with us—of what we deserve at his hands, &c.—and that it is dangerous in the *extreme*, to rest in any opinions on these momentous subjects, which are formed independently of the word of God; and more especially, if they seem to contradict its general tenor, or any of the plain and express declarations of it.

Hence appears the necessity and vast importance of such a divine revelation as the scriptures contain, and of forming our sentiments and opinions, in what relates to the character and ways of God, our relation to him, and concerns with him, by these divine oracles, taking the words in their most plain and obvious meaning, when one passage is compared with another, and the occasion, subject, scope, and connection of each, are duly considered, and earnestly praying for the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, to guide us into all truth—fully persuaded, that it is for our true and real interest, on the whole, to know and believe the truth, however severely it may reprove and condemn us.

But if notwithstanding the evidence of our danger, from the blinding and perverting tendency and influence of our interested feelings, we will regard them, rather than the plain language and decisions of the word of God, and even torture and wrest the scriptures, to make them speak a language agreeable to our sentiments or wishes, would it be strange, if we should be left to strong delusion, to believe a lie, and perish?



*Instructive and animating truths suggested in Isaiah li. 1, 2.*

“Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.”

**I**N these words God addressed the faithful among his ancient people, those that followed after righteousness, those that sought the Lord, and called their attention to facts suited to afford them seasonable and important instruction, and to administer encouragement and comfort to their hearts.

The faithful being few, and outward appearances dark and discouraging, with respect to the interest and prosperity of Zion, God, to instruct them, and to encourage and confirm their faith in his promises, directed them to look to the rock whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged—to look unto Abraham their father, and unto Sarah that bare them; adding, “For I called him alone and blessed him, and increased him.”

Here, for illustration, it may be observed,

1. God, by his almighty power, agreeable to his free promise, produced the nation, which were his peculiar people and church, from Abraham and Sarah, when, according to the ordinary course or power of nature, there was no probability of such an event; so that they were produced by as evident a mira-

cle, as if they had been hewn out of the rock, or dug out of the pit—as if they had been produced out of stones, or formed of clay digged from the pit.

When Abraham was *alone*, without any offspring, and without any prospect of having any, God called him, and blessed him, and increased him—when considering his and his wife’s age, there was no hope of any such event, according to the ordinary course of things, any more than that a numerous offspring should spring from the flinty rock, or from the water and miry clay of the pit. See Rom. iv. 17—21. and Heb. xi. 11. 12.

2. From this fact it may be gathered, that they who become the children of God, his own people in the most distinguished sense, even the righteous nation, who keep the truth, and to whom the gates of the heavenly city are opened, that they may enter in, [Isai. xxvi. 1, 2.] are produced, born, or caused to exist *as such*, in a supernatural way, by the interposition of a power properly divine.

When God was about to distinguish one nation from all others, to be in a peculiar sense his own, to dwell under his peculiar care and government, and to enjoy distinguished privileges and blessings, *as such*, and therein to exhibit a figure or representation of the whole redeemed church, even of the church of the first-born, to be gathered out of all nations, and finally brought to dwell together in heaven, *He* did not take a nation for these purposes, which was or should be produced in the ordinary way, without any su-

pernatural interposition of divine power for its production ; but he chose and called Abraham to be the father of this nation, and promised that he would make him fruitful, when he was alone, and deferred the execution of the promise till he was as good as dead—till he and Sarah his wife were so old, that it as really required the special interposition of divine power in a supernatural way, as it would to produce men out of the rock, or a nation from the clay-pit. Doth not this plainly intimate, that the true people of God in the most distinguished sense, who shall dwell in the heavenly Zion, are produced, or brought into being as the children of God, and caused to exist in that character and relation in a supernatural way, by the interposition of divine power, operating out of the ordinary course and beyond the ordinary power of nature ? Ishmael was born after the flesh—not in virtue of God's promise to Abraham, but according to the ordinary course of nature, without any special or miraculous interposition of divine power ; but he was not suffered to be heir with Isaac who was born after the Spirit—who was born in fulfilment of God's gracious promise, and by virtue of a special, supernatural, or miraculous interposition of divine power. So now, They who are born only of the flesh, and who seek and endeavor to obtain acceptance as righteous, and a title to heaven, in the natural way, by their own obedience, righteousness, or goodness in any shape whatever, will be excluded from the heavenly inheritance ; whilst they who are born

of the spirit, and look for righteousness unto eternal life, in a supernatural way of justification by the faith of Christ, are acknowledged heirs of heaven, and shall finally become actual citizens of the Jerusalem above.—This much, I think, may be fairly collected from Paul's observations in Gal. 4th towards the close. See also John i. 12, 13. and iii. 3. 5.—Likewise Ephes. i. 18—23. and ii. 1—10.—It may be observed again,

3. However unlikely or impossible it may look, that a holy people should be produced, and a holy church built up, and Zion filled with inhabitants praising God and rejoicing in his goodness and favor, *out of such materials as mankind are* ; yet in the fact, to which God directed his people to look, we have a striking specimen of his power, goodness, and faithfulness, as being sufficient to effect such great and glorious things, and of the certain fulfilment of all his promises respecting them. Think of what God hath done—how he called Abraham alone, when he had no child, and when almost all the world were sunk into idolatry, and blessed and increased him, and made him a great nation—think of this, when you read or hear the wonderful predictions, the great and precious promises which follow, viz. “For the Lord shall comfort Zion : he will comfort all her waste places ; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord ; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.” &c.

This fact, this great event, which God called his people to

look to and consider, was well suited to teach them to despair in themselves, of any sufficiency, strength, or righteousness of their own, and to trust in him—in his power and wisdom, grace and faithfulness; and particularly, to believe and be assured of the certain fulfilment of all his promises respecting the enlargement and prosperity of Zion, and that, even when all outward appearances have the most dark and discouraging aspect. God hath promised, Zion shall be comforted—the Lord will comfort all her waste places—though she be like a desolate wilderness, she shall be made like Eden, and filled with joy and gladness, thanksgiving and praise. Do you doubt of this?—Doth it look as though it was impossible?—Look to the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the pit whence ye were digged—consider what God hath done, to human appearance as unlikely and impossible, as what he now promises; “and be not faithless, but believing.”

Hence the children of Zion, the people of God, should learn and be excited to acknowledge themselves entirely indebted to him for their very existence in that character and relation, and for all their privileges and happiness therein; and of course, to entertain humbling and abasing thoughts of themselves, and the most thankful, admiring, and exalting thoughts of his wisdom, power, and grace, and to glory only in the Lord. From the facts and truths, which have been suggested, they should also learn entirely to despair of effecting the enlargement and prosperity of Zion, by all their

own power or holiness, and to seek and pray and labor for this, in an entire dependence on God, and in a firm confidence of the fulfilment of all his promises respecting it.

From these truths and facts they likewise may and ought to derive encouragement, support, and comfort to their hearts, in times when outward appearances are the most dark and discouraging.

From the same facts and truths sinners, and awakened, distressed sinners in particular, may also learn from what source there is any ground to hope for their salvation, and not to indulge to despair, although they are sensibly convinced that their case is so desperate, that they may well despair of relief from all human resources, and that their recovery and salvation would be as real a miracle, as the production of children, to serve and enjoy God, from the rock and from the clay of the pit.

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*On the reasonableness of an immediate repentance.*

(Continued from p. 207.)

17. **T**HE next consideration to which I would call the attention of my readers, is, the dreadful punishment to which the impenitent are constantly exposed, and which they will surely suffer if they continue of their present character. Every thing which pertains to the future world, is transcendently important to beings who are to exist hereafter; but the prospect of unalterable and eternal happiness or misery, is to



immortal beings, of all subjects the most awful and commanding. On such a subject the reasonings and conjectures of man are vain, and often presumptuous; happily we are in this amazing concern left to neither. The scriptures of truth have informed us what are the destinies of the righteous and the wicked in the world to come.

\* From these alone could we hope for the information; and since God, in them, has graciously afforded it to us, let it be our concern, that the knowledge we have thus obtained be wisely exerted. In order to give a proper view of the future punishments of the wicked, I shall quote several passages of scripture from among many of a similar import. *Psa. xi. 6.* "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup."—*Isai. lxvi. 24.* "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."—*Matt. xiii. 41, 42.* "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."—*Matt. xxv. 41.* "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."—*Mark ix. 47, 48.* "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to en-

ter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."—*2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9.* "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."—*Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.*

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." That these portions of the word of God relate to sufferings infinitely surpassing human conception, is evident to every person who reads them with decent attention. Two prominent features in the inspired descriptions of future misery, are its dreadfulfulness, and its duration. The first is represented by all the awful images most calculated to affect the imagination, and thus to influence the sinner to escape from so tremendous an evil. What is more dreadful than to be tormented with fire and brimstone? What more expressive

of extreme torture than *weeping, and wailing and gnashing of teeth*? The duration of this *vengeance* of an offended Deity, is declared, in the passages I have quoted, to be *for ever and ever*; the *worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*; the destruction with which those are punished who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, is an *everlasting destruction*, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up *for ever and ever*. Words and phrases more naturally conveying the idea of *eternity, or endless duration*, cannot be found in any language. Let the reader fix his mind upon the awful import of eternal punishment; let him consider that the word of God denounces it upon every impenitent sinner; and let him pray to be enabled by the Spirit of all grace, to make a proper use of the amazing consideration. We are apt to speak of the importance of various sublunary things; and, in a degree, many such things have an importance; but what resemblance has any thing on earth to the vast concerns of the world to come?—What are fire and sword, pestilence and famine, those terrible ravagers of human happiness, compared with the misery of a single immortal soul condemned to everlasting burnings? The very thought of such horrible perdition is enough to overwhelm the mind with utter dismay; what then must the endurance be?

It is evident that the Deity, by the revelation of future punishment, intended it should have an important influence over our conduct while in this state of probation. The emphasis which

is laid upon it by our Saviour and his apostles, as well as the force and certainty of the language used, and the frequent mention of the subject, all conspire to show that this was the design of God. It is, then, of transcendent interest to us, that we receive these awful declarations as the word of God, not as mere threats of intimidation never intended to be put in execution, but as the denunciations of Jehovah which admit not the least allowance; and that we settle it in our minds, as unalterable truth, that if we *escape not* from this eternal punishment, we must surely *suffer it*.

Many persons, when they hear such doctrine delivered from the desk, affect to consider it as mere priestcraft, and turn from it with a supercilious air, or attempt to outbrave it by a laugh, observing, perhaps, that they wish not to be *frightened* into heaven. Miserable deluders of themselves! It is to be feared, the time will come, when God *will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh*. Let all such, and all others who remain impenitent, be exhorted *to flee from the wrath to come*.

C. Y. A.

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Remarks on the 18th Chapter of Ezekiel.

THIS chapter has been considered by many as being extremely dark and mysterious, and withall very difficult to reconcile with the general tenor of divine revelation, and especially with the important doctrine of the *certain perseverance*

ance of saints.—Under this view it has been resorted to by those who have adopted a different sentiment, as furnishing ground of support. On a slight perusal of this chapter, it is confessed these difficulties appear formidable, and operate almost to shake the faith of many a sincere believer in the truth of the divine promises, and especially that of our blessed Saviour, “that those whom he loveth, he loveth unto the end.” These reflections, and having noticed the perversion of what appears to be the correct meaning of the passage, have induced the following concise remarks. In the first place, it is worthy of remark, that this prophecy was delivered in about the 8th year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, about 590 years before the Christian era; and to the captive Jews whom he had carried to Babylon, and shortly after he had captivated almost the whole kingdom of Judea, carried away all the rich vessels and furniture of the temple, and brought them to Babylon. This event took place long after they had rejected the true worship of God, and had lived in a state of *idolatry*, had been repeatedly warned and admonished by the prophets, and severely punished in various ways, by God in his providence, for these their national sins. Under these punishments and chastisements, the rebellious Jews had not only continued in the same practice of iniquity, but had also murmured against the justice of the divine dispensations with respect to them, and introduced this proverb “The Father’s have eaten

“the sour grape, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.”

The plain language of which is, our fathers are said to have sinned against God, and we, their innocent children and posterity, are suffering the consequences, which we consider unjust. In this way they justified their own impiety and wickedness, and discovered hearts utterly impenitent, while they presumptuously charged the Most High, with cruelty and injustice. This chapter begins with reproving these Jews for this their arrogant presumption and wickedness, and proceeds to vindicate the divine justice, and the severity of his dispensations, and asserts the doctrine of divine sovereignty herein, from the consideration, that all souls were his. And to evince still further the rectitude of his providential dealings with them, he condescends, by the prophet, to reason with them, and from the 5th to the end of the 9th verse to *state* and *recapitulate* the terms on which a man should find acceptance with God. I say *recapitulate*, because, by attending to the injunctions made upon the Jews in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy, we shall find that all the particulars in the before mentioned verses, were there enforced upon them to observe and practice, as being specially commanded of God, as those duties which they owed to God, their neighbor and themselves. These were to be performed with *all* the heart, and all the soul, and all the strength, and all the mind. That is, these acts of duty were to be performed with a deep and impressive sense of the rightful authority



of Jehovah, in giving the command, accompanied by unfeigned love to his *holy* character as *such*, and both evinced by those acts of cheerful and willing obedience. And it is particularly to be noticed, that one of the most essential of the statutes which the Most High gave to the Jews, was that they should *love the Lord their God, with all their heart, soul, &c* See Deuteronomy 6th Chap. 1 to 6th verse.

"Now these are the *commandments, the statutes and the judgments* which the Lord your God, commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it. That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God to keep all his *statutes* and his commandments, which I command thee, thou and thy son and thy son's son, all the days of thy life, that thy days may be prolonged."

"Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe and do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee in the land that floweth with milk and honey."

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*"

"And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, &c."

See also the 11th verse of the 7th chapter and the 11th verse of the 8th chapter, and a variety of others.

After enumerating from the 5th to the 8th verse the various duties included in the second ta-

ble of the law, the whole is summed up in that comprehensive manner in the 9th verse, "*Hath walked in my statutes, and kept my judgments to deal truly he is just*, he shall surely live saith the Lord God." This *walking in the statutes* and keeping the judgments of God, as herein expressed, included in it love to God, and a consequent temper of obedience to him, which is that to which all the promises in the Bible are made, for saith our Saviour, love is the fulfilling of the law.

From the 10th to the end of the 13th verse, we have a description of the character of a profligate and wicked son, of a righteous father, with an assurance, that the righteousness of the father shall not avail to the benefit of the wicked and impenitent son, and to support the truth of the declaration before made, viz. "The soul that sinneth *it shall die.*"

From all this the Jews might very naturally draw this conclusion, that all their impeachment of the divine justice was groundless and criminal, and was an admonition to them to examine *their own heart and conduct* to find the true cause of all those awful and exemplary judgments of God upon them, and no longer to attribute these to the sins of their fathers. If the foregoing remarks are correct, it is believed that the sentiment advanced by some that nothing more was required in this chapter, than merely the performance of those duties of the second table, commonly called duties to our neighbor, to entitle any one to the favor of God and eternal life, is without foundation.

Upon this construction it appears that something more was required of a Jew, than merely the performance of *external rites and ceremonies*. They were required to exercise *love to God, and faith* in the great expiatory sacrifice which in the fulness of time was to be offered up, and to which all their bleeding sacrifices pointed, and which alone rendered them of any significance. And as this was delivered to the Jews, they could not reasonably hope for acceptance short of love to God, faith in the typified Saviour to come, and a faithful and honest observance of all the various duties to their neighbor, and all these performed from a spirit of obedience; for all these were included in *keeping the statutes and judgments* of God. In the 21st and 22d verses we are assured, "If the wicked man will turn from his sins which he hath committed, and *keep all my statutes*, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions which he hath committed shall not be mentioned unto him. In his righteousness that he hath done he shall live." This represents a state of pardon and justification, and the terms of it. But this could not be obtained in consequence of any righteousness simply theirs. The ordinance of the scape goat was of divine appointment, and plainly signified that a substitute was necessary, that their sins must be borne by that substitute, and therefore faith in that substitute as a type, was a necessary condition of their justification.

The apostle Paul assures us,

that without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin: and further, that the blood of bulls and of goats were of themselves wholly insufficient; the unavoidable inference, therefore is, that in every acceptable sacrifice the Jew must have had his faith fixed upon Christ, the promised Messiah and great expiatory sacrifice, of which his was but a type. In confirmation of this sentiment we are assured from the highest authority, that Christ was the *object* of the *faith* of the believing Jew. Our Saviour saith that Abraham "rejoiced to *see my day, he saw it, and was glad.*"

The result and sum of the foregoing remarks, is this:—That the terms and conditions on which the promise of life is made in this chapter, are these, viz. supreme love to God, faith in the promised Messiah, as the great antitype, to which the law sacrifices were but types, and a faithful performance of all the duties enjoined, as the fruit of an honest and obedient heart. And that a mere performance of external acts of obedience, without a corresponding disposition of heart to the divine law, will be unavailing and insufficient.

In the 24th verse it is said, "When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? all his righteousness which he hath done shall not be mentioned, in the trespass that he hath transgressed, and in the sin which he hath sinned, in them shall he die." The righteousness allu-

ded to in this passage, is the same as that mentioned by the apostle, when he says, "that being ignorant of Christ's righteousness and going about to establish a righteousness of their own they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." This sentiment is confirmed by the 13th verse of the xxxiii chap. of Ezekiel, viz. "When I shall say to the righteous that he shall surely live, if he trust to his *own righteousness*, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered, but for his iniquity which he hath committed, he shall die for it."

In viewing such passages, it may be useful to notice the distinction between that kind of righteousness which is merely selfish, or what the prophet calls *his own righteousness*, and the righteousness of faith. The former is represented as being always offensive to God, the latter always acceptable. One is the fruit and effect of the implantation of grace and holiness by the divine Spirit, the other is the effect of an unholy and sinful nature.—This holy temper is peculiar to those who are born anew by the Spirit of God, and are the sons of God; the other the product of an heart wholly under the dominion of sin. That the righteousness there mentioned is of the character mentioned by the prophet as their own righteousness, may be inferred from that expression in the passage quoted, "Doth according to all the *abominations* that the wicked man doth."—The character of the wicked is, that they have no fear of God before their eyes, and being

quite destitute of true love to God, or holiness of heart, their thoughts, words and actions are evil, only evil, and that continually, and in the chapter under consideration they are represented as living in the open and continued violation of the commands of their Maker, and in the commission of those flagrant iniquities, which are quite inconsistent with their possessing any principle of saving grace or holiness of heart.—If any are in a state of favor with God, it is in consequence of their being created *anew* in Christ; that is, as the apostle expresses it, the old man or body of sin is destroyed, and the new man, or new nature is created, after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness; and all this is necessary to their being able to do any thing acceptable to God, or to entitle any one to the promise of life. In this the holy Spirit of God takes possession of the soul for himself, as a trophy of his infinite power and grace, and being thus possessed of his own will, and by his almighty power, who shall dispossess this divine resident. But in order to its being lost, Satan must dispossess the Holy Spirit of his empire in the soul, and again take possession for himself; or God must repent his having taken that soul for his own, and consequently give it up; in either case, the divine power or divine stability is impeached, and his infinite character traduced.

The apostle in view of this subject, with an emphasis peculiar to the case, saith, "Who shall separate us from the love of God." And after enumerating



the most probable causes, he summeth up the whole in that impressive manner of his, viz. "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The plain inference from the whole therefore is, that the heart being totally destitute of true love to God, from which any acceptable obedience can flow, the righteousness from which he is represented as turning must have been merely a legal or ceremonial righteousness, on which he depended, until the want of a principle of heart holiness, permits him to fall into crimes which at once mark and fix his character.

That something more is required than merely the performance of external acts of obedience, may be inferred from the following expressions, viz. "Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin.—Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby you have transgressed, and make you a *new heart* and a *new spirit*, for why will ye die."—Here we find that a new and a penitent heart is required, accompanied by a turning from all their iniquities, and all their transgressions of the holy law of God, as the natural fruit and evidence of this *new heart* and *spirit*, to entitle the subject to life.

And since by the *gospel* of the Son of God, life and immortality are more fully and clearly brought to light, we are assured of the absolute necessity of a

new heart, and an holy disposition, to enable any one to exercise love to God, repentance for sin, and faith in Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners, which are indispensable requisites to obtain pardon, justification and salvation, through the atonement and righteousness of Christ.

ZETHER.

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Remarks on 1 Cor. v. 9—11.

"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the extortioners or with idolaters, for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat."

VARIOUS have been the opinions which have been entertained by professing Christians, respecting the design of the apostle in these directions; some supposing it to include a prohibition against members of a church of Christ, eating at common meals with an excommunicated person, others that the offended should be debarred the privilege of partaking with the church of the sacramental supper. The writer had long been of opinion that the former sentiment was correct, but on examining and reexamining the whole chapter, doubts have arisen, whether the apostle's mean-

ing had not been misunderstood.

1. It seems that the apostle had written to the church at Corinth on the general subject of maintaining an improper communion with immoral and scandalous persons. In which he directs them not to be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers," &c. and it would seem from his remarks to his Corinthian converts, that by attending to these, they had overlooked or neglected their duty respecting their treatment of an immoral professor. This seems to be evident from what the apostle observes, in the former part of the chapter, where he tells them, that it was commonly reported to him, that there were some amongst them who were guilty of the most flagrant offences, such as even the unbelievers were ashamed to be guilty of; and that notwithstanding their Christian profession and character, they were so far from disciplining the offenders, that in boasting of their Christian profession, they had made it a cloak to cover their faults.—Under this apprehension he proceeds to give his directions more particularly, herein letting them know how they were to treat a brother who should be guilty of such offences; as in the 11th verse he says, "But now," that is in the former part of this chapter, "*I have written* unto you, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or a covetous, &c. with such an one no not to eat." Here the apostle speaks in the *past tense*, and by looking back to the directions he had just been giving them, we can more readily as-

certain his meaning. He tells them that when they are gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they should deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh; that is, they were to deprive him of those privileges which as members of the gospel church they were permitted to enjoy; and in that way the incorrigible offender, would be considered (agreeable to the directions of our Saviour) as an heathen man and a publican. Thus he would be deprived of his standing or membership in that church and of the privilege of partaking with them of the Gospel feast. By thus purging out the old leaven, they were directed by the apostle, to be prepared to keep the feast, which was indeed a representation of Christ our passover being sacrificed for us.

In this feast they were not to permit those who were a scandal to Christ, and his religion to unite with them to eat.—But since he, judging of them in the spirit of Christ, had declared them unfit to be members of his Church, therefore, he says, put away from *amongst you* that wicked person.—Here they were to put him away from *amongst them*. In this he speaks of them collectively, and in all the expressions, there seems to be an allusion to their eating at the sacramental supper.—This construction of the passage comports with the direction of our Saviour, that an excommunicated person should be considered and treated as an Heathen man and a Publican. But how are Christians to treat such? If we are to take our Saviour for an ex-

ample herein, we are not bound to decline the common intercourse of eating with them; for it seems he did freely eat with Publicans and Sinners.—When therefore a person is excommunicated, neither the Church nor its individual members, have any thing further to do with him in the way of discipline, so long as he continues excommunicated.—For saith the apostle, what have *I* to do to judge them that are *without*.

### ZETHER.

*Contemplations for Christian communicants previous to, or when sitting down at the table of the Lord; suggested by an angel's kind address to pious women who were seeking their beloved Lord. Matthew xxviii. 6, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."*

A FEW remarks may be made with respect to the benefit which Christian professors may derive from coming, and, by an eye of faith, viewing the place where the Lord Jesus lay. We cannot see this place now with our bodily eyes, as the angel invited the women to see it; but we may contemplate on it—may enter into the certainty of it, and by faith view the tomb—the silent bed in which the body of our Lord slept. We can see this now, as well as the Galatians could see the crucifixion of Christ, when he had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven before they ever heard of him. Gal. iii. 1. "O foolish Galatians who hath bewitched you, that ye should not

obey the truth, *before whose eyes* Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" How was Christ crucified in the sight of the Galatians? Answer, In the teaching and instructive sacrament of the Lord's supper, as well as by the apostle's preaching.

In a word, while we turn aside, to behold this great sight, the immaculate Lamb of God carried to a silent tomb, and there abiding so long a space, as to evidence that he was really dead, and then by his own power breaking through the bands of death, triumphing openly over the cross and the grave, some profitable truths, in a convincing light, are exhibited to view: and here 1st, We may see the love of Christ.

We read of love that is strong as death. Cant. viii. 6. And is not the love of Christ stronger, in as much as he went through death in its most bloody colours to express it? When our Lord wept at the grave of Lazarus the Jews said, Behold how he loved him! Much more reason have we to say, looking into the sepulchre, See how he loved us! If we view his dead and mangled body, we shall see the marks of love upon it.—It is love without a precedent—without a parallel! Greater love hath no man than this, we are told, that a man lay down his life for his friends; but Christ died for his enemies—for the ungodly.

2. While we view the place where Christ lay, we may see the demerit of sin. The blessed Saviour took the low place of the sinner, and had the sins of a guilty world placed to his account; and all the shame, con-



tempt and pain which he underwent, was but the desert of sin.

And when we see him bleeding and expiring on the cross, we have set before us in a striking light the demerit of sin—The wages of sin is death. And when we cast our eye into the sepulchre, we may discover the victorious arm of death; and that it is sin that exposes to it—Had we not deserved death, if we had looked a thousand times into the tomb, we should never have seen Jesus there. Let us view, and be affected at the sight, saying in our hearts, we see now what has wasted all our generations, viz. sin as the meritorious and procuring cause.

3. By looking into the sepulchre where our dear Lord lay, we may behold the inflexible justice of God.

In many ways the great Lord of all hath made it appear, that he hates sin: he hath done this by the judgments of his mouth, in his written word—He hath done it by the judgments of his hand, in the course of his holy providence—He hath revealed his wrath from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of man: but never did his justice appear so conspicuous, so illustrious as in the sufferings and death of our glorious Immanuel. When we take a view of this, we may exclaim, in the language of the Psalmist, "His righteousness is like the great mountains, and his judgments are a great deep? May we not say that the justice of God is more illustrated and manifested by the death of Christ, than by the overthrow of fallen angels—the drowning of the old world—the burning of Sodom

and Gomorrah—the destruction of Jerusalem—yea, more than by the eternal perdition of ungodly men? While we look to the place where Christ lay, we may cry out, with holy awe, Oh, the inflexible justice of a holy God! When the eternal Son of his love took on him the iniquities of men, he would not spare for his crying; but said, awake, O sword, against my shepherd, &c.

His darling must enter the dreary tomb, and there lie for a space, (after all his other sufferings,) rather than one jot or tittle pass from his law, or his justice suffer in the least. But,

4. Come, see the place where the Lord lay, and there you may see, to your great consolation, that glorious attribute justice, *fully satisfied*, and the gospel covenant ratified. Justice having seized the Son of God, man's sponsor, and sent him into the darksome tomb, had he not given full satisfaction to it, he would have remained there for ever, a sacrifice to this dear perfection of Deity. The women who came to the sepulchre and looked in, might have seen him there—the unbroken chains of justice would have held him there a *prisoner* without release. But when we look in, and find he is not there, but is risen, we learn the satisfaction of his blood—that justice hath no further challenge—a gospel covenant evidenced and established—and a strong consolation set before those who have fled for refuge, and laid hold of Christ by faith. To this import we read Col. ii. 15. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew

of them, openly triumphing over them in it." This open shew he made when he quitted the tomb, and bade farewell to the last remains of death.—With how much propriety might he then exult, "Where's thy victory, boasting grave!"

5. We learn from the resurrection of Christ, that the gospel hope is a sure hope.

He who laid down his life, and had power to take it again, and is truth itself, and cannot lie, surely is worthy of credit—and hath power and authority to settle and establish a religion which will not fail those who have the promises of it on their side. The promises of such a personage are of worth. Then let us lay hold on them, rely on them, and seek the consolation which is treasured up in them. And let us take the exhortation given in 2 Cor. vii. 1, "Having therefore *these promises*, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

6. By viewing the place where Christ lay, we may be confirmed in the belief of our own resurrection.

Do you sometimes, under the power of temptation, question the resurrection of your own bodies? Come view the place where the Lord lay; for now is Christ risen, and become the first fruits of them who sleep in him. And if we believe that Christ died, rose and revived, even so them who sleep in him, will God bring with him. 1 Thess. iv. 14.

The resurrection of Christ and that of believers, are but parts of the same design—and

there is such a connection between them, that if the dead rise not, then Christ is not risen. 1 Cor. xv. 16.

In a word, when you who are Christians come and see the place where Christ lay, and have your faith established in his resurrection, from the same proof you may be assured of your own—For, if the Head be risen so will the members rise in due time. So that you may comfortably conclude, God hath begotten you again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

Thus we see, some good lessons may be learned, by coming and beholding by faith, the place where the Lord lay.

Now let Christian professors, when they are approaching the holy communion, (and indeed, at all suitable times,) improve the thought, "Come, see the place where their Lord lay." Let them view it with contrition for sin, and abasement of soul, that ever they should run so far in debt to divine justice, that nothing short of the sufferings and death of Christ could atone for them, and bring them to God.

It was for our sakes that he entered into this hole in the rock, and made his bed in darkness.

Again, Let us view the place where the Lord lay, with admiration and astonishment, that so high a personage as the Son of God, one equal with the Father, should lie so low with the marks of dishonor upon him. What manner of love is this! The very angels, no doubt, view it

with amazement—and beside, while we view this place, let us renew our humble trust in God through Christ for salvation.

Is our faith weak and wavering, let us view the certainty of Christ's resurrection, and of our own, we being united to him—and if we can be well fixed in this, and that we have an interest in him, what a foundation have we for hope and joy? See 1 Pet. i. 20. "God raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God.

Further, Let the view of this place where the Lord lay, remind us of our own death—Though in the instance before us, death is swallowed up of victory, yet this was not to free us from a natural death, but to take away the sting of it, and purchase a joyous resurrection from the dead. Hence, we have reason to be very thankful to God, that he hath made the important point of Christ's resurrection so sure and incontrovertible. We have as good evidence of its truth, as the nature of the thing will admit; or indeed as we can desire; and those very endeavors of the Jews to destroy the belief of it, serve to establish its truth. Christ had before put the truth of his mission at issue upon this single point, his resurrection from the dead. Matt. xii. 39, 40. And now it being accomplished, he hath the proof of a true prophet. Deut. xviii 21. Then let our faith be strong in this belief, and strong in the Lord.

And, let us gratefully and affectionately remember the Redeemer. Let us not forget his dying love—and endeavor to be

properly affected with the view of it, especially whenever we celebrate it at his table. Surely he hath done enough to induce us, for ever most cordially to remember him, and bear him on our hearts. While we muse, let our hearts burn with holy affections to him, who left his Father's bosom for us—exchanged his native heaven, (veiling his divinity) for an uncomfortable manger, an agonizing garden, an accursed cross, and a borrowed tomb.

And let us in future make it our care to manifest a due regard to him, by living to him, in patterning after his example, and conforming to his laws.—And if we be found righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, we may expect to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb in his kingdom—be fixed as monumental pillars in the temple of our God, and go no more out.

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*Memoirs of Miss Abigail Potter.*

**A**BIGAIL POTTER, was daughter of William and Abigail Potter. Her grandfather, by her mother, was Joshua Sayer, a native of Deal, in England, who, in early life, joined the Church under the care of the Rev. Mr. Evans; and at the age of about 30 years came to Newport, and became a member of the Second Congregational Church. After communing in this connection for 15 years he was unanimously chosen Deacon, in which office he continued till his death.



His family was numerous and the greater part of his children became professors of religion, who with the professors in their own families, form a larger proportion of the church, than perhaps the connections of any other family in the town, if not in the state.

ABIGAIL POTTER was born Sept. 24th, A. D. 1764.—In the opinion of some of her friends, she was endued with grace in a very early season.—From her first being able to read, she delighted in the sacred scriptures. She appeared pleased with their principles as well as history, and to have imbibed their spirit, being strictly conscientious and exemplary in her conversation and deportment.

At the age of 18 or 19, she experienced a very distressing despondence; which in a degree impaired her judgment, and disqualified her for the duties of life. This continued about nine months. She then became calm, and was intent on divine subjects, constantly enquiring into things of a religious nature.

About four years after, she relapsed into a similar distress, in which she continued longer than in the former instance; and for much of the time was not able to pursue any employment in the day, or to enjoy rest in the night; and could not judge of those gospel truths and consolations, which related to her case.—After many months, either from a crisis in her disorder, or some gracious interposition of God, but not, as could be known, in consequence of any instruction, she suddenly manifested her usual discretion and calmness—light and peace

were restored to her—and in this happy state she continued till the close of life.

Her last sickness was a nervous fever. She was not apprehended to be in danger, till within a few days of her decease. When acquainted with it, she appeared much solemnized, but not alarmed. She spake, in a very striking manner, of her unworthiness; but said, she “knew that her heavenly Father would take her in his arms, and bestow upon her greater blessings than could be enjoyed on earth, or than could be conceived.—She observed, after the sabbath, that it was “very pleasant on that day, when confined from public worship, and on a bed of sickness to contemplate Christ arising from the dead, and triumphing over all the powers of darkness.” She further observed, “We read in scripture, that *God hath put all things in subjection under the feet of Christ*, including things in heaven and on earth. Oh, how satisfactory to consider, that *all* things are subject to him! Were but one excepted, a link, as it were, would be taken, and the glorious chain broken and ruined.”

She experienced but few changes in her external state: the course of her life, in this sense, was remarkably uniform. And her temper generally corresponded to it, being equable, diligent, and faithful. As a specimen of her habitual exercises, and not as communicating any thing unusual, the following selections, from several of her letters, are presented to the reader:

## LETTER, NO. 1.

*My dear Cousin,*

The all-wise Governor of the universe has seen fit, in his holy providence, to call you again to experience his afflicting hand in removing another of your brothers by death. I think it a duty to sympathize with you, and hope we shall exercise a true submission to the righteous will of the Most High. In this world we are in a state of trial, exposed not only to every natural evil, to losses and disappointments; but there are a variety of delusive objects, the powers of darkness, and the evil propensities of our own hearts to overcome: and in ourselves we are feeble and helpless.—Where, then, can we look for support, but to that almighty and merciful Saviour, who has invited us “to come to him,” and to cast all our burthens on his gracious arm. Have we any doubts that he is willing to receive us? Let us consider the proof of his love, in his first giving himself for us—and in his carrying on the work of redemption. He has purchased the influences of the Holy Spirit to operate on the hearts of his people, without which all outward means would be of no saving benefit. He not only accompanies his written and preached word with his inestimable blessing, but by it renders the dispensations of his Providence, even the most afflictive, subservient to his people’s best good.

I hope, my dear Cousin, we shall wisely consider the present afflictive event, and improve it to the important purposes for which it is sent. If we are faithful, the short time allot-

ted us in this probationary state, we shall triumph over every evil, and shall rest in that world where there is no sorrow, for there is no sin, and shall join with the holy angels, and all the ransomed of the Lord, in celebrating the praises of redeeming love, not for a few years, but for a boundless, and never-ending eternity.

## LETTER, NO. 2.

Religion is not only calculated to support and console the mind in affliction, but is the only source of real and lasting happiness in every circumstance in life. Mankind have naturally a desire of happiness, and are constantly influenced by it, however different their practices, or how deluded so ever some may be in expecting to find solid satisfaction in the enjoyments of the world. Is it not the language of the most pious and wisest of men, that religion only can afford happiness to the rational mind? It is true we ought not to be influenced in the choice of religion, merely by a desire of our own happiness; where this is the case, the person is not only destitute of the first principles of Christianity, but directly opposed to them. It is necessary to the faithful discharge of duty, that we act from right principles, that we esteem beings according to their real worth, consequently our supreme affection will be placed on God. If our motives be right, we shall love him supremely, not because he is kind and good to us, and we are dependent on him for all we enjoy and hope, but because he is infinitely excellent in himself, possessed of every possible per-

fection, "in which view only, he can be an object of supreme love." The same principle, so far as we are actuated by it, will lead us to a just regard to our neighbor, and to do to others as we would they should do to us. It will lead us to avoid all sin, and comply with every duty; to be grateful for every mercy, and patiently submissive under every affliction and disappointment, and to say with our blessed Saviour, "Father, glorify thy name: not my will, but thine be done." This is the temper which all holy and rightly disposed beings exercise, and so far as we are righteous we shall discover the same disposition, "the same mind will be in us, that was in Christ Jesus."—We shall love the divine law as holy, just and good, and behold it a transcript of the moral perfections of the Deity: and the Redeemer will appear glorious and amiable, not only as our deliverer from everlasting punishment; but likewise in vindicating the justice of God, by supporting and magnifying that law which condemns us for every transgression. Is not every rational creature under the highest obligations to love, serve and obey the Creator? especially are not those whom he has been at the infinite expense to redeem with the blood of his own Son? In the gospel dispensation, all the divine perfections are manifested in the most astonishing manner. Here are the most wonderful displays, not only of the love and mercy of God, but of his justice, his purity, his hatred of sin. Every divine attribute is harmonized, and shines forth in the brightest and

most resplendent lustre. Well might the angels sing, at the birth of the Saviour, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." Is it not of the highest importance, that we attend with diligence to these things, that we make them the chief object of our pursuit, and resolve, by the grace of God assisting, that we will serve him in sincerity? In this way, and in this only, shall we glorify God, be faithful in the discharge of our duty to each other, and in this way we shall be subjects of a happiness that shall leave no wish ungratified, and will never, never have an end. May God of his infinite mercy grant, that while I hope I am sincere, in endeavoring to recommend religion to others, I may not be deceived, and destitute of it myself; but that I may obtain mercy of the Lord to be found faithful, and be washed from all my sins in that blood that is sufficient, not only to cleanse Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but all the world of mankind, if they would apply to it, and at last be made a conquerer, and more than a conquerer, through him that has loved us, and given himself for us.

## LETTER, NO. 3.

As things are circumstanced, it is probable we shall never have much opportunity of conversing with each other; and, perhaps, shall never see each other's faces, in this world: but I hope we shall meet in a happier state, where no possible separation can take place; but where all the faithful shall be transformed into the image of their glorious Redeemer, shall



behold the unclouded light of his countenance, and join in celebrating his praises for a never-ending eternity. This we are assured in scripture will be the happy state of all the real friends of Christ. Though, as there are different attainments in grace, we have reason to believe there will be different degrees of glory yet each one will possess a happiness, of which at present, we can form no adequate conception. To this state of blessedness, shall every individual, that exercises any degree of true faith in Christ, be brought. The weakest are as truly united to Christ, as those most eminent in grace. The faith they exercise is of the same kind, though not of the same strength.—Christ is made of God to all believers, Wisdom Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. But redemption is not compleat in this life. The best are sanctified, but in part. They have their remaining corruptions; a body of sin in them, from which they shall not be entirely released, till this mortal shall put on immortality, then their redemption will be compleat; and, I believe, if we are so happy as to arrive safely to Heaven, we shall feel, in a higher sense than is possible in the present life, what is expressed in the 124th Psalm, *Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.* Then we shall look back upon the dangers we have escaped, and realize, that it is by *grace we are saved*; and shall say, “Not to ourselves, but to

thy name, O Lord, be all the glory.”

#### LETTER, NO. 4.

The present is a time when religion is much opposed. Its enemies are exerting their power to the utmost, to extirpate it from the earth; and it is of importance that all who are friendly to the Redeemer should consider, not only the necessity of exercising faith in him, but the duty of making a public profession of religion, and attending on the sacrament of the Lord's supper. It is the command of Christ, respecting the institution, “this do in remembrance of me.” And though we have reason to believe, that many will be found among the real friends of Christ, who never openly espoused his cause, and professed his name before the world, while many, who made the highest professions will be rejected and disowned, yet this ought not to excuse, or discourage any one who has experienced that change of heart which is necessary, in order that any duty may be discharged to the divine acceptance.

It is not essential that we know when this change took place, but we are to judge of our state by the evidences of grace that we find in our hearts; and if we cannot with Peter, appeal to the searcher of hearts, and say, “Lord, thou who knowest all things, knowest that I love thee,” yet if we see the moral evil of sin, feel it to be a burthen, and sincerely desire to be delivered from the power and dominion of it, as well as from its ruinous consequences, there is evidence that our hearts are re-

newed ; for such exercises are not consistent with the governing influence of a carnal mind, which is enmity against God ; which is the character of every one by nature. Let us not, then, be discouraged, though in ourselves we are infinitely unworthy and ill-deserving ; but let us consider the riches of that grace, which brings those, who might justly suffer the righteous displeasure of the Most High, into *the glorious liberty of the children of God*, and renders them *joint heirs with Jesus Christ*. Let us put our trust in the Omnipotent Redeemer, who has vanquished the powers of darkness, and will lead all who trust in him, to a complete and final victory, over all their enemies. He has been *touched with the feelings of our infirmities*. He sees the most secret exercises of our hearts, and knows all our conflicts with indwelling sin, and has promised *his grace shall be sufficient for us*. Let us, then, in a sincere dependence on that grace, resolve, that we will keep all his commands ; and may God enable us, to place our whole dependence on him, and grant that we may continue to the end, to the glory of his grace, in Christ Jesus.

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*Biographical Sketch of the Reverend Doctor Stillman.*

**S**AMUEL STILLMAN, D. D. was born in Philadelphia, Feb. 27, 1737. He was educated at an Academy in Charleston, S. C. where he was ordained in Feb. 1759. The same year he took his degree at

Philadelphia College, and settled in the ministry at James Island, near Charleston. Obligated on account of his ill health, to quit that place in about 18 months after his first residence there, he removed to Bordentown, N. J. where he continued two years supplying two different congregations. Afterwards he visited New-England, and after having officiated at the second Baptist Church in this town about one year, was installed over the first Jan. 9. 1765.

Dr. S. was by nature endowed with a good capacity, and an uncommon quickness of apprehension. His feelings were peculiarly strong and lively ; which gave activity to whatever he did and, under the influence and control of religious principles, served to increase that eminent piety, in which nature, no less than grace, seemed to have aided him. To this constitutional ardor, both of sentiment and action, which led him to enter *with his whole heart* in whatever he engaged, he united a delicacy, that would not intentionally wound the feelings of any one ; and such easy, affable and gentlemanly manners, as would adapt themselves to almost any society, without diminishing in the smallest degree his personal respect on the one hand, or carrying the least mixture of austerity or precision on the other. The lively interest he appeared to take in whatever affected the happiness or increased the pleasures of his friends, the gentleness of his reproofs, and the gratification he seemed to feel in commending others, united to his social qualities, endeared him to all who knew him.

The popularity of a preacher commonly declines with his years. Dr. S. however, was a singular exception to this general remark. He retained it for upwards of 42 years, and his congregation, which, upon his first connection with it, was the smallest in this town, at the age of 70, the period of his death, he left amongst the most numerous.

As a minister of Christ his praise was in all the churches Nature had furnished him with a most commanding voice, the very tones of which were admirably adapted to awaken the feelings of an audience; and he always managed it with great success. His eloquence was of the powerful and impressive, rather than of the insinuating, and persuasive kind; and his manner so strikingly interesting, that he never preached to an inattentive audience. And even those, who dissented from him in some *minor* points of theology, were still pleased with hearing him; for they knew his sincerity—they knew him to be a good man. There was a fervor in his prayers, that seldom failed to awaken the devotion of his hearers; for, *coming from the heart, it failed not to reach the hearts of others.* In his sermons, he was animated and pathetic. His subjects were often *doctrinal*, but he commonly deduced practical inferences from them, and every one acknowledged his great usefulness. He preached much to the feelings and to the heart; and numbers, on whose minds naked reason and simple truth could produce no serious effects, his powerful eloquence was a means both of touching

and reclaiming.—Nor was he only a preacher of righteousness.—What he taught that others should be, he lived himself.

In the chamber of sickness and affliction he was always a welcome visitor. So well could he adapt his conversation, as to comfort or to caution, soothe or to awaken just as the case seemed to require. And if he administered reproof, it was done in so delicate and mild a manner, that it oftner conciliated esteem, than created offence. In his prayers with the sick, however intricate the occasion, he was always both appropriate and highly devotional. So eminent was his character for piety, and so universally was he beloved, that he was often called to the sick and afflicted of different denominations. How many wounded hearts he has bound up, and from how many weeping eyes he has wiped the tears away; how many thoughtless sinners he was the means of awakening; and how many saints he has edified and built up unto eternal life; how many wavering minds he has settled, and to how many repenting sinners his words administered peace, can be fully known only at the great day.

The University in Cambridge, conferred on him the honorary degree of A. M. in 1761, and the College of Rhode-Island, gave him a diploma of D. D. in 1788.

To his church and people he was particularly attentive, and suffered no calls of relaxation or amusement to interfere with the conscientious discharge of the smallest professional duty. His duty was always indeed his delight, and nothing in his mind



ever stood in any sort of competition with it.

His domestic character was in perfect unison with the other parts of it. Of husbands he was one of the most kind and accommodating;—of parents, the most affectionate and endearing. It pleased the Author of Wisdom to visit him with peculiar trials.—In the course of a few years he was called to bury *seven* of his children, all adults, and some of them with families; yet such was his confidence in the perfect wisdom of God's government, that he was always patient and submissive, and his mind lost nothing of its lively confidence and cheerful hope.

His habit of body, through life, was weakly, and he was not unused to occasional interruptions of his ministerial labors; yet he survived all his clerical cotemporaries both in this town and its vicinity. It was his constant prayer that "*his life and his usefulness might run parallel.*" In this his desires were gratified. A slight indisposition detained him at home the two last Lord's days of his life. On the Wednesday following the second of them, without any previous symptoms, he was suddenly attacked, at about 11 o'clock. A. M. by a paralytic shock.—At 10, at night, having received a second stroke, he grew insensible, and at 12 expired. Could he have selected the manner of his death, it had probably been such an one as this, which spared him the pain of separation from a flock he was most ardently attached to, and a family he most tenderly loved; a scene, which to a person of his feeling

mind, notwithstanding all his religion, must have occasioned a shock. On the Monday following, his remains were attended to the Meeting-house, where a pathetic and appropriate discourse was delivered on the occasion, by the Rev. Dr. BALDWIN, pastor of the 2d Baptist Church in this town, from 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. to an immensely thronged, and deeply affected assembly; after which he was conveyed to *his long home*, amidst the regrets of a numerous concourse of people, who crowded around his bier, to take a last look at the urn, which contained the relics of him, who once to them was so dear, but whose face they now should see no more. His loss will be long felt not only by his own immediate society, but all his other numerous friends.

*The memory of the just is blessed.*

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From the Christian Observer.

*Means of ascertaining the State of the Affections towards God.*

IT has been justly stated as one of the most prominent proofs of human corruption, that we are naturally disposed to use a different standard of right and wrong, of duty and obligation, in our reasonings and dealings, if I may so term them, with God and with man. In the case of our fellow-creatures, we admit the claim of superior excellencies and perfections to admiration and love: we bow with reverence before superior understanding and

knowledge : it would gladden our hearts to be invited to repose our trust in any man in whose character, extraordinary wisdom and goodness should be combined with unequalled power and inviolable truth. We should ardently hope for the favour of such a man, and if he should be willing to admit us to his friendship, we should glory in such an honorable connection. Above all, it is acknowledged, that benefits and kindnesses claim a return of thankfulness ; and to say of a man that he is eminently ungrateful, is to stain his character with the blackest die.

How differently we are apt, even allowedly, to reason, and think, and feel towards God, and our blessed Saviour, needs but to be stated. The contrast is too clear to require specification or proof. Even in the case of our fellow creatures, we are perhaps more indebted for the justness of our moral estimate to self interest, than to any of those higher principles, and more elevated sources, to which our pride would dispose us to trace its origin. It is intuitively obvious to every man, that he will not be allowed to have one set of principles for himself, while he imposes a different set on other men. He is therefore content to admit the authority over himself of those principles which it is his interest to see generally established ; and his self love evidences its power, not in fabricating a false and partial rule in his own case, but in evading, by unfair coloring, and fallacious distinctions, the obligations of the general and true standard. But we are not thus

forced, in the case of the Almighty, into the recognition of just principles by a regard for our own immediate and palpable interest, and therefore here, our natural selfishness operates with less restraint : just as it has been found that tyrants, who have been flattered into such an extravagant idea of their own perfections, as to deem themselves elevated above the ordinary condition of man, have appeared, by losing the wholesome restraint of sympathy, to lose all sense of moral obligation.

I have often thought that the preceding considerations, and the highly important practical lesson which results from them, are suggested, and powerfully enforced on us, by the mode, universally adopted throughout the Holy Scriptures, of describing God, and the relations in which we stand to him, by names used to designate certain conditions in life. It seems as if the Almighty, in gracious condescension to our weakness and infirmities, was willing to obviate the effects of our natural selfishness, and to prevent it from rendering us insensible to his claims on us, as, our Creator, Governor, and constant Benefactor. Thus God is represented continually as a king and a father ; and, more or less expressly, once at least I remember in positive terms, he claims the peculiar sentiments and feelings which are acknowledged to be due to the fellow creature who stands in those relations to us. "If I then be a father, where is mine honor, and if I be a master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of Hosts unto

you." In the same manner we find our Blessed Saviour calling himself the father and friend of his people ; nay even the husband of his Church.

The foregoing remarks have often appeared to me to suggest the best method of examining ourselves respecting both the nature and the degree, of those affections which we are required to feel towards our heavenly father, and our Almighty Redeemer ; and, if I mistake not, we may also be hereby assisted in cultivating their growth, and extending their influence.—Some difference indeed there ought ever to be between our feelings towards God, and towards our fellow mortals. With all our thoughts of the Supreme Being, and with all our affections towards him, a holy reverential awe should doubtless be associated ; nor is there any thing more severely to be condemned, or more contrary to all which we are taught, whether directly or by inference, in the word of God, than that profane boldness which has sometimes falsely usurped the name of filial freedom. But still the passions of the mind, whether directed towards God or man, are the same in their nature ; it is only requisite that they be somewhat differently combined when directed towards the Sovereign Majesty of Heaven, and when employed on any meaner object.

To explain, therefore, more particularly the process I would recommend to be pursued. Are we desirous of ascertaining whether we really *love* God and our blessed Saviour ? Let us consider how we reason, and

think, and feel, towards any one of our fellow creatures, whom we know certainly to be the object of our warm attachment, to a beloved parent or brother, or to the friend of our heart. We shall find that we are acute to discover, and forward to admire and magnify his good qualities and actions ; to overlook what is faulty ; to judge favorably of what is doubtful. We love to bring forward, and dilate on his merits : to suppress, deny, or palliate his defects. We rejoice in his society : we regret his absence : we long for his return : we welcome his approach : he is much and often in our thoughts : we are zealous for his credit : we are forward to defend his character : we rejoice in opportunities of giving him pleasure : and if, in any instances, we profit from his kindness, our gratification is powerfully enhanced by considering the source from which the benefit has flowed. Now let us, if we would honestly examine into the reality and warmth of our love to God and our Saviour, deliberately set ourselves to enquire whether our feelings towards God, or towards our Redeemer, are such as these ? Do we find ourselves prone to lose ourselves, as it were, in the contemplation of his excellencies ; to muse on his wisdom, his goodness, his power, his condescension, his long suffering, his truth, his holiness ? I will leave it to your readers to pursue the parallel for themselves : I will only ask, do we find ourselves welcoming the sacred seasons of intercourse with our heavenly Father ? Do our countenances lighten up, and our



eyes bear witness to the warmth of our hearts, when, in conversation, supposing neither the season, nor the company to forbid the introduction of religious topics, an opportunity is afforded us of dilating on his perfections, and "speaking good of his name?"

Let me now proceed to another example, that of *gratitude*. And here I must premise, that there is not any sin whatever against which the Almighty more strongly denounces his vengeance in the Holy Scriptures than against the contrary vice. Let us take an instance of any one who has benefited by a fellow creature, as much I will not say (for that is impossible) but as nearly as possible as much, as we are all indebted to God.—How would he be expected to think, and feel, and act towards his Benefactor? How would an ingenuous mind be looking out for opportunities of manifesting its gratitude? How would it delight in pouring forth its warm effusions; and instead of detracting from the amount or number of the services it had received, how would it rather delight in multiplying, and magnifying them? The enumeration of our obligations would be no unwelcome, no cold, no reluctant service; not a service of which it would be necessary to remind us that the proper season was come, and of which if we were disappointed, without its being clearly our own fault, we should secretly, not so much regret, as rejoice in the omission. If our Benefactor were no more, how dear would his memory be to us; and supposing him to have left behind

him any friends or descendants, how endeared would they become to us, and how glad should we be to shew them kindness for his sake? Alas! Sir, how little do the best of us feel, in any adequate degree; I had almost asked, how little do we recognize in any degree, the proper forms and characters and exercises of a *lively* gratitude? Let me again leave it to your readers to complete the humiliating parallel. I will only remark that we are here, if I mistake not, more deeply, and with less excuse, criminal, than almost in any other instance; that every improvement in the performance of this duty will be an accession to the purest of our pleasures; but that I believe the best of men, while they continue in the body, will have a painful sense of their own deficiencies in this particular, and will long for that day, and that world, when, with completely purified hearts, and more exalted faculties, they shall mix in the songs of angels round the throne, acknowledging, however, far more and transcendently higher obligations.

I will be more brief in speaking of the feelings of reverence and of trust, of hoping, and glorying, and delighting in God, all of them affections towards God clearly recognized in Scripture, and for which the most holy men, whose characters are delineated in the sacred volume, especially he who was honorably distinguished by the name of the man after God's own heart, and the great Apostle of the Gentiles, were eminently remarkable.

What have been our feelings, and our demeanor, if it has ever happened to us to be in the pre-

sence of some fellow creature who has really been the object of our reverence? And when we think, or speak of the Supreme Being, or even when we more purposely and deliberately set ourselves to address him in prayer, do we find that our feelings and demeanor attest, in any similar degree, the reality of our reverential awe?

By what a terrible denunciation is *trusting in God* enforced on us? And in truth we receive such continual proofs of the hollowness of all human foundations of confidence, that prior to experience, we might naturally presume that the injunction to trust in God was one which we should not be apt to disobey. But the contrary, it is to be feared, is the fact. To ascertain the point; let a man observe his own heart, and watch how naturally and eagerly, on the approach of any serious danger, his mind recurs to any one from whom he has reason to expect protection:—does he find himself, in any sudden emergency of peril, as naturally and as warmly flying in heart to God; or is not this too generally rather an affair of the judgment and recollection,—a sort of homage which it is deemed decorous to pay, but on which little dependence is really placed, and in which the affections are little interested?

The inquiry concerning our *hoping*, and *glorying* in God, and *delighting* in him, may be conducted with still greater facility and certainty. We all know how we feel about any thing which is really the object of our hopes. Let us recal any occasion in which our hopes were warmly

excited. How anxiously did we wait, how eagerly did we long for the desired event! How much did it occupy our thoughts! How apt was it to force itself into the mind! How obstinately did it maintain possession! Were we not ready to intrude the mention of it even when contrary to propriety; and was it not like the removal of a weight which had hung upon us, and oppressed us, when we were able to talk of it again without restraint? And again, if our hopes were disappointed; how flat and tasteless were at first all our ordinary occupations, and even pleasures, and how prone were we to dwell on our loss!

*Glorying* in our God and Saviour, is an affection expressly enjoined by the divine command, and powerfully recommended to us by the example of the most eminent of the worthies, both of the Old and New Testament.—Would we try ourselves whether or not we really obey this precept? Let us recal our own sensations and conduct; let us recollect the language and behavior of others; in any instances in which we or they have unquestionably gloried in any possession or distinction. Take a man who glories in his illustrious birth, or in his connection with persons of rank. Take one who glories in his country.—Take one who glories in his reputation for wisdom, or learning; for poetical excellence, for great riches, for military talents and exploits. We know well how such an one would be likely to behave; how apt he would be to seek occasions to bring into notice the point on which he founded his consciousness of su-

periority; how his bosom would swell, and his manner become animated on the mention of it. Now I will not say, does a Christian exhibit such indubitable proofs that it is in his God and Saviour he glories; but has he the *feeling* of exultation secretly in his heart, and are the marks of it only restrained from breaking forth, by the just considerations of prudence and decorum? Does he secretly rejoice and exult in the honorable distinction he enjoys of being a child of God and an heir of glory; the follower and friend of that Saviour, who now sitteth at the right hand of God, angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto him?

Then, for *delighting* in any object, we know that it is the strongest phrase which can be used to express our receiving pleasure from it. The appeal is therefore to be made to the manner in which we have felt respecting any person or thing whence we have derived the highest of all enjoyments.

But I am conscious I am trespassing on your time. There is however one other affection on which I must detain you for a few moments; because, though there is none that is more clearly required of us, and, what is more, the want of which is more strongly condemned; yet is there perhaps none in which, especially in our halcyon days of the Church, Christians are more apt to be defective. I mean the affection of *zeal*. Is it within the compass of language to express more strongly the condemnation of lukewarmness in religion, or to press more powerfully the cultivation of zeal,

than they are respectively condemned and enforced by the language of our blessed Lord himself to the Church of Laodicea? Yet it is so little regarded as a crime not to be zealous in the cause of God, that any extraordinary measure of religious zeal is almost deemed to require apology. This is an instance in which, in this free country, where we are so commonly divided into sects and parties of different kinds, men may try themselves, perhaps, more easily, than almost any other.—Would we then judge fairly whether we really are zealous in the cause of our God and Saviour? Let us inquire how any man is apt to judge, how to feel and to act, in the case of the political or religious party to which we know that he is warmly attached; and how, on the contrary, towards that which is opposed to it. Through what a partial medium does such a man view the actions of his party? How prone is he to be blind to its misconduct, and to magnify and overrate its merits? How studious of occasions of serving his party? How eagerly does he embrace, how reluctantly does he forego them? How warm in vindicating its credit; how jealous of any imputations that are cast on it; how eager in repelling them? How active in promoting its interests; how glad to increase its numbers? And if he be really a *zealous* partizan, of what kind are his habitual judgments and feelings respecting those who are foremost in the party to which he is opposed? Suppose him to be connected with any of them by the bond of being engaged in some common pursuit, is he



apt in such a case to lose sight of all party distinction? Is his mind so occupied with the points of agreement, as to forget the ground of separation? We might call such a man liberal—we might say of him, that he possessed an enlarged mind; but we certainly should not regard him as a zealous partizan. I know that I am here treading on tender ground. I am not ignorant that it may be imputed to me, that I am endeavoring to call into action those feelings of hostility, which, from the corruption of our nature, we are but too apt to indulge, under the mask of religious zeal. No one is more aware than myself, that “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” But surely it is no idle distinction, that we are to discriminate between the pernicious opinions themselves, and those who hold them. Surely a warmth of resentment against those who profanely calumniate the object of our highest veneration, and most affectionate gratitude; against those who deliberately set themselves to oppose the only means by which the eternal misery of man can be averted, and his everlasting happiness secured: surely a warm resentment against such as these, is not incompatible with tender pity for them, and a sincere and even earnest desire for their being reclaimed from a course, which must end in irrevocable ruin. No spirit of hostility would I recommend, but such as is inseparably combined with a cordial longing for the real happiness of the person opposed. No other spirit can flow from that pure source, from which all the affections of

the renewed mind must trace their origin.

I ought not to conclude without reminding your readers, that they will do well, when they are carrying on the work of self-examination, to be ever on their guard against mistaking the conclusions of the understanding for the affections of the heart. The remark, I am aware, is not a new one: still the mistake is, as I apprehend, so very general a source of self-deception, that I should scarcely be justified, were I not, in this place, to warn my readers to watch against its delusions with the most jealous care. This is no barren metaphysical distinction, no matter of speculation merely. No Christian will deem it such who has attended with care to what has passed within him, and who probably has often known instances in which, when his judgment has been perfectly convinced, he has not been able to entertain the corresponding feelings; and after many a painful effort, has probably sat down, lamenting before God his own inability to command the affections of his mind; to feel love where still he recognized excellence; to feel gratitude where he acknowledged the highest obligations to be justly due.

It is the grand recommendation of the mode of conducting the work of examination above described, that it greatly facilitates the process. I have often remarked in persons who were by no means of inferior understandings, but who were not accustomed to meditate in train, or to observe the operations of their own minds, a great inability to discharge this im-

portant duty. When they set themselves to the work, their imaginations almost immediately begin to wander, their attention is distracted, and they soon give up their efforts in despair. But the mode I have recommended, renders easy what might otherwise be a vain endeavor to fix the volatility of the imagination, and to arrest the fugitive feelings of the mind, so as to make them the subjects of steady contemplation: nay more, it renders what might be a difficult and doubtful appeal to abstract principles, a question of fact and experience, a mere matter of recollection, in which we are called on to remember how we have been used to think and feel on certain other occasions, and to compare our present with our former experience. Persons, therefore, who would be utterly unequal to the task of analysing their various mental emotions, and of comparing them with the sensations which the metaphysician has laid down as the signs of the passions respectively, may easily examine themselves in this way by comparing their feelings at one time with their feelings at another.

This mode likewise, in some degree, removes the difficulty which arises from the impossibility of measuring the feelings by any definite scale, a circumstance which may open a wide door to self deception on the one hand, or which on the other may often afflict the heart of some sincere but weak spirited Christians with unreasonable fears. The same degree and warmth of feeling are not to be required of a man of exquisite sensibility, and of him whose

mind is constitutionally cold and phlegmatic; but every man is hereby made his own standard. He may compare his various feelings and affections as they are severally called forth by religious concerns, with the same feelings as they are excited on occasions of an analogous nature in common life, and mark the accordance or diversity.

And now, Sir, let me deprecate the displeasure of any of your readers who may think that I have been only laying before them remarks which must have already suggested themselves to any intelligent mind. Were I disposed to apologize, I might reply,

*Virginibus puerisque canto.*

But in truth, Sir, I am not at all disposed to apologize. Such is the extreme importance of the subject, that any endeavours to illustrate it will deserve attention. No one who admits the authority of the holy Scriptures can deny that they most clearly and strongly enforce on us the duty of loving God and our Redeemer with our whole hearts; and of feeling towards them all those other right affections of our nature, which are given us to be called out on the exhibition of their proper objects. Any directions, therefore, which may assist us in discharging those important, and it is to be feared, too much neglected duties, may be of the highest practical use. Shall I be forgiven if I speak my mind honestly, and say, that these practical subjects are the subjects to which Christians would often do well to direct a larger share of their time, and thoughts, and studies; rather

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than to those higher and more subtle questions, which though of so much less practical and real moment, so generally engage the labors, and interest the passions of men. Let the learned prosecute their researches in the field of Sacred Literature. Let the scholar, provided it be with a humble impression of his own limited powers, explore what is dark, and explain, if he is able, what is difficult. *Inest sua gratia.* No efforts are to be despised which are made in the right direction. But, O that men would remember, that it ought to be our first, our supreme, our never ceasing object to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," to form ourselves after the model of his perfect character, to endeavour to root out every remaining fibre of our natural corruptions, and to acquire and cultivate all those tempers and dispositions, which may "render us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

I am, &c.

VIGIL.

From the Christian Observer.

*Sketch of the Character of a Christian.*

THE true Christian feels that he is the object of God's love, and whilst he marks, and acknowledges with thanksgiving, his own daily experience of it in the providential care of his heavenly Father, he perpetually looks with heart felt rapture, gratitude, and adoration to the transcendant display of it, in the

redemption of the world from sin and misery, by the gift of his only Son. Hence the love of God animates his soul, and becomes the governing principle of all his actions; and he demonstrates the force of it, by love to all his fellow creatures. He beholds with steadfast eyes, the high reward of glory and immortality with Christ in heaven, promised to faith and obedience; and whilst he knows the imperfection of his best services, and wholly renounces all reliance upon them, as any ground of claim to eternal life, he labors incessantly to render them more perfect, as if his salvation solely depended upon the success of his own endeavours. He therefore gives all diligence to "make his calling and election sure," ever striving to "add to his faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity." Sensible at the same time, that all spiritual graces are the gift of God, without whose assistance he is unable of himself to will or to do any thing that is good, he prays for them with earnestness, peruses the Scriptures with diligence, and hears the preaching of the word with deep attention, humbly beseeching God, for Christ's sake, to enlighten his understanding, and purify his heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the conformity of his life to that of his Saviour, he looks for the evidence of his faith in him, comparing his conduct with the precepts in the New Testament, and with the example of his di-



vine Master, as the only sure tests by which to judge of that conformity.

Meek, humble, courteous, patient, and forbearing, deeply conscious of the natural depravity of the human heart, and of its proneness to evil, he examines all its thoughts and suggestions with scrupulous severity, proves the motives of his actions, and endeavours to subjugate his appetites, passions, desires, and affections to the law of God, which he constantly studies. Notwithstanding his vigilances to avoid giving offence to God or man, he still feels the daily necessity of imploring the pardon and mercy of his Creator, through the meditation of his Son Christ Jesus, and humbles himself in deep repentance before him. He is at the same time charitable in judging his neighbours, and cautious lest he should inadvertently publish their faults or follies. But he knows the duty of a Christian, and the obligation of the law of charity, too well, to withhold admonition and reproofs on just and proper occasions, and he imparts them in the spirit of brotherly love. In all his conversation with mankind, it is his object to edify by the purity of his discourse, and the propriety of his example; he is not only careful to abstain from evil, but to avoid the least appearance of it, lest he should unwarily mislead his brother, and become a scandal to his high profession. To the fatherless he is a father, to the afflicted a comforter, and as far as his means allow, a merciful dispenser of the bounties of God to the poor and needy. That means may not be wanting

for this purpose, he considers a just economy to be a duty of strict obligation.

Is the Christian a husband and a father? he reflects upon the obligations, which these relations impose, and studies anxiously to discharge them with fidelity. His marriage vow, to "love and cherish" the partner whom God has assigned to him is ever present to his thoughts. He appropriates and applies to his situation, the apostolic injunction, "Bear ye one another's burthens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," and he exemplifies the doctrine conveyed in it, by the invariable kindness of his own demeanor. As a father, he deems it his first duty to train up his children in the knowledge and fear of the Lord. He is sedulous in instructing them, constant in his admonitions, mild in his reproofs, and merciful in his chastisements, at all times studious to enforce his precepts by his own example, and whilst he requires from them the reverence and respect due to parental authority, he never fails to recollect the injunction of the Almighty, in his appeal by the mouth of the prophet to the Israelites, "If I then be a father, where is mine honor, saith the Lord of Hosts." As a master, the Christian is kind, forbearing, just, and considerate; temperate in his commands, but conscientiously steady in enforcing the observance of them; not severe in marking the faults of his servants, nor careless in duly reprehending them, always remembering that he also has a master in heaven. He feels it his duty to instruct them, to watch over their con-

duct, to reprove and check any immorality in it, to avoid placing them in situations of temptation, and to set them an example of sobriety, temperance, and orderly behaviour, under an awful sense of the responsibility attached to his influence and power over them. As a servant the Christian is faithful and obedient to his master in all things, not with eye service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart fearing God; accommodating to his fellow servants, and ready to assist them in any emergency; unassuming and contented in his present condition, having his thoughts fixed on a better world. As a member of society, he primarily considers the duties of that station in which it hath pleased God to place him, and labours to discharge them faithfully: he also considers in what manner his talents can be best employed for the good of the public or of individuals, and he cheerfully resigns a portion of his ease and comforts, in order to promote these ends.

The Christian examines and weighs the customs of the world by the unerring rule of the word of God. He is careful to avoid any singularity in his dress and behaviour, or in matters of an indifferent nature. But he is still more careful to adopt only such customs as are innocent. By the same rule, he regulates both

the quality and quantity of his amusements, and whilst he rejects all that have the remotest tendency to inflame the passions, or corrupt the heart, he extends his exclusion to others which are often erroneously deemed innocent, because he sees the tendency of them to be to weaken his spiritual affections, alienate the heart from God, and occasion a loss of time which can never be retrieved; ever remembering the warning parable, that whilst the husbandman slept, the enemy sowed tares among the wheat. Time indeed he considers as the most precious of all the talents given to him for his improvement, and as the most important of all his possessions; and he therefore husbands it with jealous care.

In looking over the Christian world, he laments the various divisions and schisms which prevail in it, but still more the animosities subsisting among those who profess to follow the same Lord and master; and his daily prayer to God is, that all believers in Christ may hold the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

"It is my meat and drink to do the will of my heavenly Father," is a saying always present to the view of the true Christian. God in Christ is the object of his love, his all in all; and to promote His glory the unceasing effort of his whole life. Grateful in prosperity, resigned in adversity, praising and blessing God for what he bestows, withholds, or inflicts; he walks through the world by the light of faith, with his eyes fixed on the prospect of that eternal home, where sorrow can never enter, and from which joy shall never depart.

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